

Fire Prevention Checklist for Your Home

- ☐ We know how to call the Fire Department (for emergencies, dial 911).
- ☐ We have removed all combustible rubbish, debris, and flammable vegetation (leaves, standing grass, brush, etc.) from our yard.
- ☐ We keep our roofs clean of all leaves and the 1/2" mesh screen on our chimney is in good order and there are no trees or branches within 10 feet of it or dead limbs over the house.
- ☐ We see that all electrical cords in our home are not frayed or worn. We never use multiple attachment plugs or run wires under rugs.
- ☐ We keep matches out of reach of small children.
- ☐ We see that no oily rags are left about the house or garage without being in tightly covered containers.
- ☐ We never store or use gasoline as a cleaning agent.
- ☐ We always keep clothing and curtains a safe distance from the stove or heater.
- ☐ We never use candles or matches to illuminate dark closets, attics, or basements.
- ☐ We keep ashtrays around the house and never dump ashes in the wastebasket.
- ☐ We realize that good housekeeping is the best method of preventing home fires.
- ☐ We use caution when smoking at home and while driving in forested areas.
- ☐ We keep well placed smoke detectors in our home.
- ☐ We never let combustible materials gather around our liquid gas storage tank.
- ☐ We know it is very dangerous to turn on lights or light matches when the smell of gas is noticeable. We open windows and ventilate the house and turn off gas at the meter or tank.
- ☐ We keep roof ladders available.
- ☐ We plan escape routes to places of safety for family and pets.
- ☐ We list all items which we wish to take with us for safekeeping.
- ☐ We have discussed the importance of safe fire practices with the children and plan on reviewing this material on a yearly basis.



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A background image showing a fire truck's aerial ladder extended upwards, with a fire burning at the top. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter.

Home Fire Safety Guide

Home Fire Escape

Every family should create a Home Fire Escape Plan. The plan should identify the fastest escape routes and strategies to be used in case of fire. The following guidelines are recommendations to be incorporated into your family escape plan.

- Each room should have two escape routes. Fire can sweep up stairways and through halls with alarming speed. For this reason, bedroom and hall doors should always remain closed at night.
- A home fire signal should be discussed and agreed upon by your family, such as shouts, wall banging or a whistle which could be hung on the back of beds.
- GET OUT FAST! Don't stop to dress or gather valuables. Don't let the children look for a favorite toy or even the family pet. Don't risk lives trying to find the source of the fire or fighting the flames yourself.
- Have a common meeting place once outside. This will eliminate confusion as to the whereabouts of family members and will ensure that someone does not needlessly re-enter a burning building.
- Don't risk serious injury or death by jumping in panic from a window high above the ground. If your escape route is blocked by the fire make sure the door to your room is closed tight, open a window a little at the top and bottom to let in some fresh air, and hang a sheet to signal your location.
- Windows can be used as alternative exits. Be sure all escape route windows are low enough and large enough to climb through, that access is not blocked by furniture, that they can be easily opened -- even by children; and that storm windows and screens can be easily removed.
- If a second floor window leads to a porch or garage roof, it may be an excellent escape route. Otherwise, second floor bed-room exits can be used via an escape ladder. Keep in mind that if the ladder must pass a lower floor window from which smoke and flames are issuing, it could become unusable.

Home Fire Detection

Smoke detectors are essential because most fatal home fires occur at night while the residents are asleep. It is recommended that smoke detectors be installed on walls (4" to 12" from the ceiling) or on ceilings (at least 4" from walls). Place detectors in bedroom areas, the dining room, the furnace room, the utility room and the hallways. DO NOT install a detector at the top of a stairway; this area is dead air space and may prevent the smoke from reaching the detector.

Test and clean your smoke detectors at least once a year. A smoke detector can save lives.

Homes Near Fire Prone Areas Require Special Attention

Millions of Californians live in residential developments that border fire prone wilderness areas. Each year, hundreds of homes in these "suburban" and rural areas are lost to wildfire outbreaks. According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, as many as 80% of the homes lost to wild fires could have been saved if the owners had followed a few simple fire safety practices.

These practices, which are mandated by law, include:

- Maintaining a 'defensible' space around your home by clearing all flammable vegetation within 30 feet of the structure. Clear dead leaves and cut small trees and brush to leave widely spaced, larger trees.
- Cleaning all needles and leaves from the roof, eaves, and rain gutters.
- Trimming tree limbs within 10 feet of your chimney and trimming all dead limbs hanging over your house or garage.
- Covering your chimney outlet or vent with a vertical spark arrester of 1/2 inch mesh screen.

Make Your Vacation Fire-Safe

Ten percent of all wildfires are started by people vacationing in the forests. Such fires are extremely costly.

The following fire-safe vacation tips can help ensure a safe stay in California's forests and wilderness areas:

- Obtain all necessary permits to build a campfire. Campfires should only be built in a campground fire-ring or in permitted areas. Use a shovel to clear grass and needles within a 10-foot diameter. Dig a hole for the campfire and surround it with rocks. Make sure the campfire is attended at all times.
- Fully extinguish a campfire before leaving the area. Pour a bucket of water directly onto the ashes and coals. Add dirt from the surrounding area and blend with water to extinguish smoldering embers.
- Equip all types of vehicles and equipment with spark arresters. Motorcycles, ATVs, chainsaws, cross-country vehicles, portable generators and trail bikes all require them if operated in or near grass, brush, or forest areas.

